

Expanded Natural Resource Interim Committee
North Idaho Working Group
Meeting Notes from May 28, 2004 Meeting

Working Group Members in attendance:

Rep. Meyer, Chairman
Sen Schroeder
Sen. Keough
Sen. Stegner
Sen Brandt
Rep. Eskridge

Working Group Members absent:

Sen. Compton
Rep. Cuddy

Meeting Notes

Dr. Dale Ralston made a presentation about the hydrology of the Palouse aquifers and a discussion of ground water problems. His PowerPoint presentation will be available on the Working Group web page.

Mr. Larry Kirkland, Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) Executive Director, made a presentation about the past and present activities of PBAC. His PowerPoint presentation will be available on the Working Group web page.

Helen Harrington, IDWR hydrogeologist, presented an overview and status of the petition filed with IDWR for ground water management and critical ground water area declarations for the shallow and deep Palouse aquifers and requesting other management actions. Notes from the presentation will be available on the Working Group web page.

The Working Group discussed the information presented. Senator Schroeder asked what role the State of Idaho might play in the activities. Mr. Kirkland mentioned several needs:

- Construction of dedicated monitoring wells
- High quality monitoring systems
- Funding for pilot projects (example: wetlands using effluent)

Mr. Kirkland suggested that the costs for dedicated monitoring wells would probably range around \$125,000 to \$200,000, although specific costs were unavailable. The Working Group requested specific information about the monitoring system and wells. Mr. Kirkland said specific needs and budget could be compiled by August. Mr. Kirkland did mention that a \$100,000 grant from US EPA had been awarded to PBAC for some aquifer study.

Working Group members discussed the role of the working group. The group is tasked to work with existing local groups. This is an opportunity for a comprehensive look at all the aquifers in the state and to help understand aquifers and how to manage them. The members discussed the need to ensure that actions developed through the Natural Resources Interim Committee are not detrimental to North Idaho and to be careful how water problems in North Idaho are promoted.

The audience made a number of comments to the working group. The issues mentioned included:

- Cross-state interests
- Land use planning
- Water conservation
- Consideration of unintended consequences from proposals to solve the Southern Idaho water crises
- Can Legislature work on funding/incentives to help communities be proactive
- Conjunctive management

The group requested the following information be presented at the June meeting including inviting Washington legislators and Department of Ecology representatives:

- Presentation about the Rathdrum Prairie aquifer by Dr. Ralston (1 hour)
- Presentation by Clive Strong, Deputy Attorney General, with Washington Attorney General representative, discussion of interstate water delivery issues
- Pend Oreille Lakes Commission
- Corps of Engineers

Chairman Meyer requested that ideas be sent to him for the next meeting in the Palouse area in July.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 28, in Sandpoint. Final meeting arrangements will be posted on the web page.

Minutes approved 7/22/04